Cab. A.

Leavenworth, Abner P.,

Letter of, from Andover Sem.,
Mar. 29, 1828. 5

John Thompson, of Princeton Sem.,
on Foreign Missions.

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* JAN 25 1906 *
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Theo. Sem. Andover Mass.
March 27th 1828.

Very dear brethren,

Your letter of March 3d was duly received; & we are well aware that you may have justly expected an answer from us before this late period. We are not willing however to charge ourselves with neglect: for thus, we should not less misrepresent the real & deep interest we feel in our late relation to you than do violent injustice to our own hearts. The truth is, we have "[taken] no note of time." Until now we have not been at all sensible that nearly three weeks have elapsed since your communication came to hand. We shall now however comply with your requests & endeavour to answer your enquiries.

Let us first express the affectionate regard which even a brief correspondence on this heavenly subject, has kindled up in our hearts in your behalf. We are glad, we rejoice to know that we have brethren at Princeton. & that we assure you, that with not a little fondness do we look forward & hope for the time when we shall be permitted to see each other's "faces in the flesh" & mingle the full tide of our souls with yours in an unreserved community of thought & feeling. We hope such an opportunity will occur; meanwhile we are one, we trust — one in spirit, one in design & shall feel a mutual interest in each others trials, joys, sorrows, successes & prospects. & always do us the christian favour to communicate with us frankly on these & other topics, remembering that we are of like passions with you. In common with you, we have a dear country to which we feel both strongly attached & obligated; a home too which we love & brothers & sisters & parents who love us — we love them, but we hope not above the Lord Jesus — No, we would fain count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; & for the privilege of communicating this knowledge to others we hope, & sometimes presume to believe, that we are willing to take our "life in our hand" & go "far hence to the Gentiles", not counting our life dear unto ourselves. Oh, when we survey the length & breadth of the land that teems with millions of our perishing fellow men who cannot hear because they have no preacher, we sometimes sink, for a moment, the deep conviction of our own insufficiency & unworthiness, & wish we had a thousand lives to consecrate to this blessed service — We wish we could rise on the "wings of the wind" that we might visit Ethiopia now "stretching out her hands", & the isles of the sea, now waiting

for Gods law", & that "from the river to the ends of the earth" we might carry the Gospel of Jesus to every hamlet & habitation of man. But I must indulge no farther, except to remind ourselves & you of the gratitude which we owe to God for the good we hope he has accomplished through the instrumentality of our society: & especially for the success with which he is blessing it among you. May God ever continue to smile upon all its interest, & upon all its members; & may the time never arrive when there shall not be found within its enclosures those who are ready to catch the ~~fall~~ falling mantle of its departed founders & wear it into any portion of our Globe where there shall be souls to be rescued from sin & perdition.

As to your enquiries respecting the origin of our society, I trust you will not be disobliged if I copy a "historical sketch of [it]" made out years ago by the venerable Fiske. It reads as follows:

" "The date of the constitution shows that it was formed in 1808, at Williams College. There is no doubt that Samuel J. Mills was the first whose feelings were interested in the object. I believe he had some thoughts, & perhaps some resolutions on the subject before he commenced study at College, his determinations were matured. I do not know at what time he first communicated his views to others; but at the close of his second year, he Fisk & Richards of the same class, and a few others had consulted & prayed, & formed the constitution. One of them told me either that the articles were agreed upon, or that the constitution was adopted one afternoon in the fields. They had walked abroad for this purpose, a shower arose & they caught shelter behind a stack of hay, & in that retreat transacted their business.

" For a considerable time their correspondence was carried on, in part, in the ~~#~~ character they had formed for the purpose. I received several letters & wrote several, in part, in this character.

Two or three years after the society was formed Ezra Fisk was sent by the Brethren to Middlebury College to promote the good object there. The Brethren defrayed his expenses. Dr Fairchild joined them or soon after. Mumms Fanny, classmate of Mills, was either a member at first, or soon joined. His name is not now in the journals nor annexed to the constitution. He soon left Williams & went to Middlebury College. After leaving College, he studied law, & is now (1818) in the practice of it at Townsend, Vermont. He is active in supporting the Gospel, but is not known as a professor of Religion. —

We have the original constitution in the character, alluded to in the text, which was invented for the purpose. Perhaps it will gratify you to have the alphabet. It will easy to make the dispointed scrawls as well as I can.

a. b. c. d. e. f. g. h. i, j. k. l. m. n. o. p. q. r. s. t. u. v. w. x. y. z

c. 7. 1. c. o. 4. 8. 2. f. j. n. f. 6, 4. e. f. 6. / 1. v. e. e. j. 4. 3. Lost. JE.f. 1e 2 1 v p v e v p e d
ey o leipove ey 7/ov3/02. JE 1 e o e d 1e 0 o 8 6, 1 o f a. 1 7th 1808.

After two or three years the society was removed to this Seminary & several became members from several colleges. When I came to the Seminary I found no member here but brother Nichols.

Tho so many have joined who have not gone to the Heathen, yet the greatest caution was used in admitting members. I was not admitted till different members had held protracted conferences with me, & one or two forms of agreement had been written, as if the thing was new. The early members I believe were very much united: at any rate they spake of each other in such terms as gave me a most exalted idea of them all.

When they spake to others of going to the Heathen, people generally thought it "only a boy's notion"; for nobody would support them there, & even good ministers thought that when they had been candidates, or missionaries six months, & had a little while to travel, they would be willing to settle. The event shows how well founded these remarks were.

Nobody could hear the first members converse on the subject of Missions without believing at least that they felt & deeply felt about it.

I believe it was at first the united & decided opinion of the members at Williams College that Missionaries should not marry. In regard to this, some of them at least have changed their opinion.

The records are defective & not perfectly accurate. I was admitted in 1810; my name is annexed to the constitution with 1811 affixed to it.

If the society is not now so necessary on some accounts as it was at first, it is still a useful & pleasant bond of union between Missionaries. As such may it long exist."

I have now given you the complete sketch of the origin & progress of our society, as drawn up by P. Fisk in 1818. The last paragraph of it seems to imply that he thought the necessity of such an association is, in a good measure, superseded. We think differently, & our opinion is founded upon minute observation & experience. If we are not mistaken, it is through the agency of this society that missionary feeling among us is chiefly excited & kept alive. It originates a system of constant efforts, for this purpose, which, tho it is unobserved & even unknown to others, is nevertheless a powerful auxiliary to the making of Missionaries.

I intended to have copied, according to your request, the names of the former & present members of our association, but I have occupied so much space with the above "sketch," that I shall be obliged to transpose them on another sheet, at a future time. You shall receive them soon.

There is no space left to tell you of the present Mission-
ary interests in our Sem. as we should be glad to do. But
you may expect to be informed on this subject in our
next, which shall not be long delayed. Allow me just to
say however, that we have lately been visited by the Rev. Mr
Baldwin of N. Y., in behalf of the H. M. S., a very favorable im-
pression has been left among us. We hope many will go on foreign
missions — we hope many will go to "the west" — as for N. England
what shall we say? we wish her well, but let her eat the
bread she has before she cries for more. Only the very least of
our fears rest upon her. If she would not starve, let her awake out
of sleep. Her resources are sufficient to evangelize the world, & certain-
ly it is due that she should evangelize herself. Besides, we are quick
to believe that the pains of hunger will dispel day dreams be-
fore they produce death. — Brethren we must cease. Remember us in
the Lord — Pray for us — "Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts & our cares." — It will ever rejoice
us to hear from you. —— In behalf of the Brethren,
I am respectfully yours in christian love,
Abner P. Leavenworth

Abner P. Leavenworth
Andover, Mar 29, 1838
Sketch Society

No. III.

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JAN 25 1906
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

1814

Mr. John Thompson
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Princeton
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Single

N.S. Brown
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